

Moscow

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Best Places to Eat

- » Delicatessen (p115)
- » Café Pushkin (p116)
- » Khachapuri (p116)
- » Volkonsky (p116)
- » Barashka (p115)

Best Places to Stay

- » Home from Home (p112)
- » Golden Apple (p111)
- » Artel (p110)
- » Basilica Hotel (p113)

Why Go?

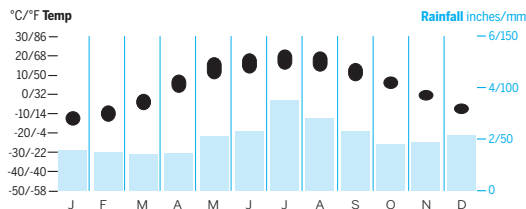
The creative energy in the capital is palpable. Former factories and warehouses are now edgy art galleries, while classic venues are experimenting and expanding. Tchaikovsky and Chekhov remain well represented at Moscow's theatres, but you can also see world premieres by up-and-coming composers and choreographers. Foodies flock to wine bars, coffee bars, sushi bars and even beer bars, while night owls enjoy a dynamic scene of exclusive nightclubs, edgy art cafés and underground blues bars.

The ancient city has always been a haven for history buffs, and new museums are broaching subjects long brushed under the carpet. The red-brick towers of the Kremlin occupy the founding site of Moscow (Москва); churches remember fallen heroes and victorious battles; and remains of the Soviet state are scattered all around.

The capital is also experiencing an unprecedented growth in birth rates. From artistry and history to recreation and procreation, Moscow is definitely a cauldron of creativity.

When to Go

Moscow



May & Jun
Long hours of daylight and mild temperatures entice Muscovites outdoors.

Sep Moscow celebrates City Day, as the foliage turns the capital splendid oranges, reds and yellows.

Dec The sparkling snow-covered city hosts its premier cultural event, the December Nights Festival.

Arriving in Moscow

Most travellers arrive by air, flying into one of the city's three airports. The majority of international flights go in and out of Domodedovo and Sheremetyevo international airports. All three airports are accessible by the convenient **Aeroexpress train** (☎8-800-700 3377; www.aeroexpress.ru; business/standard R550/320) from the city centre.

If you wish to take a taxi, it is highly recommended to book in advance to take advantage of the fixed rates offered by most companies (R1000 to R1500). Note that driving times vary wildly depending on traffic.

Rail riders will arrive at one of the more central train stations – Kievsky or Belorussky vokzal if you're coming from Europe; Leningradsky vokzal if you're coming from St Petersburg; and Yaroslavsky or Kazansky vokzal if you're coming from the east. All of the train stations are located in the city centre, with easy access to the metro. Alternatively, most taxi companies offer a fixed rate of R300 to R500 for a train station transfer.

GET THE BIG PICTURE

Moscow can be overwhelming for the first-time visitor. An introductory tour can provide an overview of the city, as well as useful advice and information for the rest of your trip.

- » **Moscow Free Tour** (www.moscowfreetour.com) Offers a free walking tour, led by knowledgeable and extremely enthusiastic guides. Did we mention it's free?
- » **Moscow Mania** (p109) Young and enthusiastic history scholars offer the informative 'Meet Moscow' tour as an introduction to the city's history and architecture.
- » **Capital Tours** (p107) Technically it's a hop-on, hop-off bus service, but it's more useful as a one-off overview of the city.
- » **River Cruises** (p106) Two boat-tour companies follow the route from Kievsky vokzal or the former Hotel Ukraine in Dorogomilovo to Novospassky Monastery in Taganka. Again, you can get off and on the boat, but the 90-minute trip is a pleasant way to get the big picture.

New in Moscow

- » **Red October** (p104) Formerly a chocolate factory, now an art and entertainment hot spot.
- » **Ivan the Great Bell Tower** (p67) Now open for business.
- » **Moscow Planetarium** (p81) Reopened after 17 years – it was worth the wait.
- » **Great Wooden Palace at Kolomenskoe** (p105) The eighth wonder of the world once more.

NEED TO KNOW

Most Moscow museums are closed on Monday, but the Kremlin and the Armoury are closed on Thursday instead.

Fast Facts

- » **Telephone area code**
☎495 or ☎499
- » **Population** 11.5 million
- » **Moscow Time** (GMT/USC + four hours)

Where to Stay

Moscow is big and filled with cars. Pay attention to the location of your hotel or hostel so you don't spend all your time commuting. Choose a place that is in the centre (preferably within the Garden Ring) and a short distance from the metro.

Resources

- » **Expat.ru** (www.expat.ru) Run by and for English-speaking expats living in Moscow.
- » **Moscow Business Telephone Guide** (www.mbtg.ru) A free bilingual phone book.
- » **Art Guide** (www.artguide.ru) Art galleries, museum and events in the capital.